

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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STATE OF ALABAMA

received
APR 18 2006

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April 14, 2006

Ms. Dorcas R. Hardy
Chairman
White House Conference on Aging Policy Committee
4350 East West Highway, Floor 3
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-4410

Dear Ms. Hardy:

First let me congratulate you, the Policy Committee, for your hard work. The delegates from Alabama have reported back to me about their experiences and were pleased with the event.

Prior to the White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA), Alabama held several listening sessions across the state in an effort to determine what our citizens were most concerned about. A slate of 20 issues surfaced from these events. Of those 20 issues, 13 were in the top 20 identified by the WHCOA. I believe this suggests there is a unified voice across our nation.

I encourage Congress to pass the Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act which is the number one resolution. Medicare and Medicaid resolutions are in the process of changes and this should continue. The Medicare D program is of great benefit to all Medicare eligibles. I also support the concepts of the Elder Justice Act (Resolution 19) and its implementation. Through United We Ride, America is beginning to address the transportation issues of some elderly and disabled, but the federal government has to make some changes in the use of transportation dollars to allow this program to be successful. Senior employment is undergoing changes currently. The U.S. Department of Labor must take a strong look at the SCSEP program and the stringent regulations.

In Alabama we are looking at ways to improve the conditions of our elder population. For example, the Safe Center concept for the construction of our new senior centers is underway. Elder abuse and fraud sessions have just been conducted across the state. We have some of the finest institutions in the nation offering geriatric education. As our senior population continues to change, we must change with it. We cannot afford to wait.

Thank you again for providing a forum to look at what we can do to plan for the future in aging.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Riley", is written over a faint, circular embossed seal.